

INSPECTION REPORT

ARAGON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Morden

LEA area: Merton

Unique reference number: 132167

Headteacher: Mrs Gill Wilson

Lead inspector: Mrs Mary Summers

Dates of inspection: 13-15 October 2003

Inspection number: 255359

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	486
School address:	Aragon Road Morden Surrey
Postcode:	SM4 4QU
Telephone number:	020 8337 0505
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. David Cheesman
Date of previous inspection:	None

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school was formed by the amalgamation of a first and a middle school just over a year ago. It is a large school, catering for 486 pupils between three and eleven years of age. Many pupils come from the largely residential area surrounding the school, although about a third travel from further afield, often from outside the borough. Most are from white British families although most ethnic minority groups are represented. A small number speak English as an additional language, but only a few are in the early stages of learning the language. The most common first languages of these pupils are Urdu and Arabic. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupil transfers during the school year is also low. When pupils start in the nursery, their levels of attainment vary considerably from below to above average. However, they are at broadly average levels for their age.

About a quarter of pupils are identified with special educational needs; this is about average, although there is an unusually high proportion with statements of special educational need, mainly with speech and communication difficulties or dyslexia.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Overall evaluation

Aragon Primary provides a **satisfactory** education for its pupils. Standards are average, although pupils in Year 2 exceed expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school is competently led and managed; performance is carefully analysed and weaknesses identified. However, these are sometimes not addressed quickly or effectively enough to improve provision for the pupils. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils in Year 2 reached high standards in national tests in 2003;
- Pupils in Year 6 reached above average standards in English in the 2003 national tests;
- Although teaching in Years 4 and 5 is good, in other year groups, for example in Years 3 and 6, it is not as good; as a result pupils' progress varies from year to year;
- The brightest pupils often do not make enough progress in lessons because the work they are set is too easy for them, especially in mathematics and science;
- The school caters for pupils' personal development well; the vast majority of pupils are well behaved, work hard and show high levels of respect for one another;
- Adults know the pupils well and provide very good support for them; pupils feel safe and are happy to come to school;
- The school has very good partnership with parents;
- Planning for school improvement is not detailed or focused enough on improving standards; weaknesses in teaching are not addressed quickly enough.

This is a new school which has not been previously inspected.

Standards achieved

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	N/A	N/A	2003	2003
English	N/A	N/A	B	B
mathematics	N/A	N/A	C	C
science	N/A	N/A	D	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. Children make steady progress in nursery and reception, doing particularly well in developing their communication, language, literacy, personal and social skills. Most meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year.

In Year 2, standards in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics were better than in most schools and pupils achieved well. By Year 6, achievement is satisfactory, although progress varies considerably from year to year. Standards in the national tests were good in English, and average in mathematics. Pupils did not make enough progress in science, however, and standards were below those expected for their age. Currently, standards in English, mathematics and science are average. Skills in information and communication technology are above average throughout the school.

Pupils with English as an additional language do well, especially in younger classes where the work is more visual and practical. Those with statements of special educational need also achieve well

because of effective support. The brightest children do not always make the progress of which they are capable because the work set is often too easy for them and fails to move them on sufficiently. The school **caters well** for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this results in the vast majority being well motivated and behaved and kind to one another. Attendance is good; pupils arrive punctually each morning, ready to begin lessons on time.

Quality of education

The school offers a **satisfactory** education to its pupils. Teaching is **satisfactory** overall, although this masks a great range of quality. Teaching is mostly good in Years 4 and 5. Often teachers use their own skills and interests to enthuse the pupils and help them make significant improvement, for example in physical education and art. Most teachers encourage pupils to speak up in class and use the new vocabulary they have learned during lessons; this helps the pupils become confident and fluent speakers. Not all teachers plan work at suitable levels for their pupils. This mostly affects the brightest pupils who often find the work too easy. In a few cases, teachers do not insist on high enough standards of behaviour during lessons.

The curriculum is well planned but inconsistencies in teaching mean that children do not all receive the same high quality experiences. A wide variety of visits and visitors to the school make lessons relevant and interesting. Pupils are well cared for and have a real say in the development of their school. Pupils with statements of special educational need are catered for particularly well. Some very effective links with neighbouring special schools have helped to guide provision for these pupils. Similar links with specialist colleges have improved the quality of provision in subjects, such as design and technology. The school works hard to involve all parents in their children's education and are very successful in this.

Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The work of the school is led competently by the headteacher, with the help of some key members of staff who carry out their roles appropriately. Management systems are in place to ensure that pupils receive a sound education but lessons are not monitored rigorously enough to make sure that all weaknesses are identified and addressed quickly. Improvement plans are not focused enough to really drive the school forward. Governance is satisfactory; governors are enthusiastic and actively involved in school life. They know what the school is good at and where it needs to improve.

Parents' and pupils' views of the school

Parents are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school. They are very pleased with the teaching and feel confident to approach the school with any concerns. Most pupils are very happy to come to school. They say that lessons are interesting and teachers help them if they find work difficult.

Improvements needed

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Plan more effectively to meet the needs of the brightest pupils, particularly in mathematics and science;
- Plan more rigorously for school improvement and ensure that monitoring systems are rigorous enough to identify and address weaknesses in teaching and learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. Standards are above average. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall although it varies between subjects. Standards are broadly average. The achievement of children in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 2 pupils reached very high standards in reading and mathematics in the national tests this year; standards in writing were above those expected for their age;
- Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in English in the tests; more pupils reached the higher than expected Level 5 than in most schools;
- Standards in information and communication technology are above average throughout the school;
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language do well, particularly in younger classes;
- Many pupils with statements of special educational need achieve well because of the good levels of support they are given;
- Children in nursery and reception classes make good progress in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development;
- Standards in science were below average in the 2003 national tests for Year 6 pupils;
- The brightest pupils often do not reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics and science;
- The rate of pupils' progress varies considerably from year to year and is closely related to inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3	15.9
writing	15.9	14.8
mathematics	17.5	16.4

There were 66 pupils in the year group.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8	27.0
mathematics	26.8	27.0
science	28.1	28.8

There were 112 pupils in the year group.

1. As this is a new school, trends in improvements over time have not been established. However, the results in the most recent National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 showed that they reached standards which were well above national expectations. Pupils achieved very well; all

pupils including those with special educational needs gained nationally expected levels in mathematics and all but a very few did so in reading and writing. The number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in the tests was more than that found in most schools.

2. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards were above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science compared with national figures. Compared with the standards which the same pupils achieved when they were in Year 2, progress was good in English, satisfactory in mathematics but was unsatisfactory in science. Science standards were lowered by the fact that very few pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in the tests. The school met its targets in English but fell short of its mathematics target. Girls did better than boys in English but the opposite was the case in mathematics.

3. The inspection confirms that pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils begin in the nursery at levels expected for their age although there is an extremely wide variation in attainment. They are on track to reach expected levels for their age in all six areas of their learning by the time they transfer to Year 1 at the end of the academic year. They do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy.

4. Standards in Year 2 continue to be above average in reading, writing and mathematics this year, although not as high as last year because of the nature of the particular group of pupils. Bearing in mind their broadly average attainment when they started in Year 1, this means that these pupils are achieving well.

5. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach average standards this year in English, mathematics and science. Although standards are not as high as last year, because of variations in the capabilities of the year groups, achievement is satisfactory. Science standards were below average in last year's tests. Inspection evidence suggests that science standards this year are likely to be average. There is little evidence of significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls this year although the school is monitoring this closely.

6. Much work has been done to improve literacy standards; good management and development of the subject meant that standards were high in the national tests in 2003.

7. Standards in information and communication technology are above average throughout the school. Despite the school having difficulties with equipment last year, pupils are exceeding national expectations for their age. The recent installation of a second computer suite, coupled with pupils' and teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject means that improvement has been rapid over the new school year. Subject management is also good and is driving improvements forward quickly.

8. Sampling lessons and examining pupils' work books in religious education, history, music and physical education show standards to be broadly average in these subjects throughout the school.

9. The school's own analysis of test information showed that pupils from different ethnic minority groups and those for whom English is an additional language do well, particularly in the younger classes. This is because of the practical nature of many of the tasks and the way that teachers effectively focus on language in most lessons. They encourage the pupils to express their views and give them good opportunities to use new vocabulary.

10. Pupils with statements of special educational needs also make good progress, mainly because of good focused support. Close relationships with the parents of these pupils mean that all understand and participate in these children's learning programmes. The achievement of other pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It varies between unsatisfactory and good because of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and additional support in lessons.

11. Inspection evidence confirms that the most able pupils are not working to their fullest capacity and reaching the levels of which they are capable in mathematics and science. In Year 6 for example, the three classes are reorganised according to the pupils' abilities in mathematics. However, even within these classes, there is wide variation in ability and teachers are not taking account of this within their lessons. Within the brightest group, a good number of pupils find the work much too easy and make limited progress during their mathematics lessons. In other year groups, again in mathematics lessons, teachers' planning varies considerably. In the best lessons, the brightest children are challenged in all parts of the lesson, by teachers posing difficult calculations for pupils to compute mentally or by setting taxing problems where pupils have to think hard. Conversely in some lessons, the work set for the most able pupils is too easy and they waste time completing it.

12. In science, teachers throughout the school are not yet planning to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Lesson plans are brief and often all pupils complete the same work. In a lesson in Year 4 for example, the worksheet was the same for all. The brightest pupils were not challenged enough, even to record their own predictions and findings in their own way. They made little progress during the lesson.

13. The rate of pupils' progress varies considerably from class to class. It depends almost entirely on the quality of teaching the pupils receive. The school's own data shows this very clearly. Although senior staff and some subject coordinators have been carrying out lesson observations over the last year, these have not been rigorous enough to result in improvement where there have been weaknesses in provision.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development; this means that most are responsible and well-behaved in lessons and that they develop good levels of independence. Attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance rates are above average; pupils arrive punctually and lessons begin on time;
- The majority of pupils behave well throughout the school day; in a few classes, boys are not managed well and they can be disrespectful towards adults;
- Pupils are given good opportunities to present their views and take an active role in school improvement;
- Relationships are good; pupils are usually kind and supportive to one another;
- Pupils' cultural development, whilst satisfactory, is not as strong as other elements.

Commentary

14. Generally the standards of behaviour are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most work hard in lessons. Parents are very pleased with their children's developing maturity. Pupils are well behaved in the playground and around the school; they help one another in lessons and older pupils look out for younger ones. In most classrooms, behaviour is good, with pupils ready to share their ideas and listen to each other respectfully. In a Year 5 lesson in religious education for example, a pupil described a recent experience of a Muslim custom of putting honey on the lips of a new baby. This experience was greatly valued by the class and the teacher. The teacher further promoted attitudes of sensitivity and respect in discussion through the good use of talk partners. In lessons where attitudes were not as good, this was as a direct result of lower teacher expectations, insufficient challenge in the pupils' work and a lack of careful management to ensure single sex groups, particularly boys, did not disrupt the work of the class.

15. The school is effective in developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness. Provision is made through circle times, citizenship sessions and assemblies to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of others' feelings, values and beliefs. Good provision is made in the

Foundation Stage and children quickly learn to share, take turns and help one another. In an assembly led by the local vicar, pupils were encouraged to reflect on a parable about Jesus and a money lender. Pupils listened attentively and responded with thoughtful answers. A good feature of all assemblies is the morning greeting to everyone, which is spoken as well as signed by all pupils.

Attendance

The school's attendance data covers its first academic year, September 2002 to July 2003. National data covers the calendar year to January 2002. Comparisons are therefore difficult but the school's figures suggest that attendance is above average.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	373	3	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	11	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	6	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	16	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is well planned and a good range of activities take place outside the school day, including visits to places of interest make the pupils' experience interesting and enjoyable. The school looks after its pupils well. Great store is placed on seeking their views and those of their parents and this accounts for the good relationships and the high levels of satisfaction and support for the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory although this masks a range in quality, from excellent to unsatisfactory. Pupils' achievements depend to a large extent upon the teaching they receive each year. Consequently their rates of progress vary from year to year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most of the teaching in Years 4 and 5 is good and much of it is very good; pupils make rapid progress in these classes;
- Some teachers have very good levels of subject knowledge, for instance in English, science, art, history and physical education; this enables them to present lessons well and get high quality work from their pupils;
- Lessons are generally interesting and maintain pupils' concentration and involvement;
- Many teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to develop good speaking and listening skills;
- Teachers do not always use their assessments well enough to provide work at levels which are suitable for their pupils; this applies particularly to the work provided for the most able pupils;
- Behaviour management is often weak in Years 3 and 6.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 56 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	13 (23%)	12 (21%)	25 (45%)	5 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

16. More than two thirds of the lessons seen in Years 4 and 5 were good or better. Pupils in these classes enjoy their lessons, find them interesting, work hard and consequently make good progress most of the time. This good teaching is characterised by crisp introductions where teachers explain to their pupils how they will build on their previous learning in the subject. Effective questioning challenges the most able as well as the least able and encourages pupils to explain their thinking. Many teachers encourage their pupils to use their 'talk partners' to share their ideas; pupils are keen to discuss their work with one another and this is a good way of encouraging them to use the new vocabulary they have learned in the previous part of the lesson. Pupils do not have time to lose concentration as the pace of lessons moves at a good rate. An excellent English lesson in Year 4 was driven by the teacher's sheer enthusiasm for her subject and clear thinking about what she wanted her pupils to learn. Standards were high with the brightest pupils working at full capacity during the session.

17. These high levels of subject knowledge are seen amongst several teachers in a range of subjects. In physical education for example, some teachers are able to use their own skills and abilities to coach their pupils very effectively in games and gymnastics. Conversely, not all teachers use the good advice contained in the physical education scheme of work to make up for a lack of confidence or expertise. This results in lessons in which the purpose is unclear to the pupils who become confused and lose interest. Occasionally weak management of pupils' behaviour results in unsatisfactory behaviour from a minority of boys. This occurs in a range of lessons and is often connected to tasks being too easy for the pupils who quickly lose focus.

18. In the majority of lessons, teachers use a good range of books and equipment to make the learning interesting. Many are already using computers in classes to allow pupils to practise what they have learned in their lessons in the computer suite and to reinforce learning in other subjects.

Year 3 pupils in a music lesson for example, were enthralled by the way a software program could be used to build up layers of sound into a rhythmical composition. Many lessons are linked so that pupils can transfer their learning from one subject to another. In a Year 4 art lesson for example, pupils learned about Tudor portraits and styles of painting which linked well to their history studies. Pupils were enthusiastic about their work and talked excitedly about it.

19. Not all lessons are planned with good attention to pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. In some cases, often in mathematics and science, the work provides little challenge for the most able pupils. In other cases, the work proves too difficult for the least able, including those pupils with special educational needs. Lesson plans in science, for example, give little detail about how pupils of different abilities will be able to move on at their own level. This means that progress in science can be hindered and this shows in the overall standards gained at the end of Year 6.

20. A recent initiative has been the introduction of individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics. This is working well in some classes but not in others and reflects the inconsistency in the teaching generally. In some classes, children know exactly what they have to improve in order to reach the next level; displays of level requirements are obvious in some classrooms and some teachers refer to them throughout their lessons. In other classes, pupils are unsure about their targets, some say they have already reached them and do not know what to do to improve. This carries over into their written work; in some classes pupils receive very good feedback about their work, with comments showing clearly what they must do to improve; in others, marking is minimal, a tick or a cross or a brief congratulatory comment with no pointers for development.

21. Teachers often provide good opportunities for pupils to learn new vocabulary and use it in discussions and in their written work. This helps all pupils, but particularly those for whom English is an additional language.

22. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Adults work well together and have a calm and positive approach, which makes children feel comfortable and ready to learn.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils. It enriches pupils' learning by organising a good range of activities after school and visits and visitors during school time. However, inconsistencies in teaching mean that pupils do not always receive high quality experiences.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some teachers make good links between subjects to make lessons more interesting and enjoyable for the pupils;
- Good links with local secondary schools enrich pupils' experiences in art and drama and design and technology in Year 6;
- Good use of visits during school time extends pupils' personal development and makes their lessons more relevant;
- The school offers pupils a good range of after school activities;
- The school buildings are well maintained, bright and stimulating for pupils;
- The curriculum is not always adapted enough to meet the needs of all pupils;
- Inconsistencies in teaching mean that curriculum plans are not always delivered in a high quality manner.

Commentary

23. Sound curriculum planning within year groups helps to ensure that all teachers offer pupils an appropriate range of worthwhile experiences, which include personal and social education. The

school gives careful consideration to the most effective way of planning and addressing all the required subjects. Recent initiatives have resulted in some good links being made between subjects to make lessons more interesting and relevant to the pupils. However, this approach is not consistent across the school and variations in the quality of teaching mean that the curriculum is not always delivered in the same way to all pupils. On some occasions the work is not matched well enough to the needs of some groups of pupils and this limits their progress.

24. The school places a strong emphasis on literacy. The introduction of guided reading and extended writing outside the literacy hour has had a positive affect on pupils' confidence in applying their basic literacy skills across the curriculum. The school works closely with two local colleges to enhance pupils' learning in art, drama and design and technology. Many pupils of all ages attend the good range of after-school activities.

25. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well, particularly in the younger classes where the work is often more practical and visual. The after-school homework club for these pupils is not as effective: pupils are separated from others when they are usually well integrated into the life of the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, although those with statements of special educational needs are supported very well. Those with statements usually have a high degree of support from learning assistants and this allows the pupils to take a full part in the curriculum and in school life generally. Those pupils without statements are catered for mainly by their classroom teachers, with some additional support from assistants. The inconsistencies in the quality of teaching lead to inconsistencies in provision for these children.

26. Sufficient members of staff are available to teach the curriculum. They have good qualifications and a wide range of experience. Teachers with leadership responsibilities often have a good level of expertise with which to advise other teachers. The accommodation is very clean, safe, well decorated and in a good state of repair. Teachers work extremely hard to provide attractive displays to stimulate learning. The accommodation, which includes a number of specialist rooms such as a practical room for design and technology and two computer suites, supports the full provision of the National Curriculum. The school has a good amount of high quality books and equipment and these are generally used well to illustrate teaching points and help pupils learn more easily; however, at present, the lack of large climbing apparatus for the youngest children restricts opportunities for them to engage in more adventurous outdoor play. The school has plans to improve the situation.

Care, guidance and support

The steps taken to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The school gives very good individual support to pupils which reflects the strong caring ethos of the school. The school is very successful at seeking, valuing and acting upon pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes pupils' views very seriously and considers them carefully when planning school improvements;
- Adults throughout the school know the children well; they provide very good levels of care;
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good;
- Arrangements for ensuring health and safety and child protection are good;
- The target setting process is not being consistently used amongst all classes;
- Supervision in the nursery outdoor area is not always successful in stopping over-boisterous behaviour.

Commentary

27. The school places a very high priority on ensuring the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Policies are in place and procedures regularly implemented to monitor health and safety and to undertake risk assessments. All staff have a good awareness of individual pupils' particular needs. Any new concerns or issues are discussed at the morning staff meeting. There are good procedures for first aid and meeting pupils' medical requirements.

28. The two deputy headteachers share the role of designated person responsible for child protection. All staff are reminded of the policy at the start of the year. There is good liaison with external agencies and staff work within the correct procedures.

29. Staff generally have a good awareness of safety issues and the site manager is active in maintaining the buildings in a good state of repair. However, there is over boisterous play in the outdoor area of the nursery, which is not addressed fully by the adults on duty.

30. There are very good arrangements in the nursery for settling children in and for assessing their progress. It is impressive that, at this early stage in the year, all children are happy, settled and well aware of the routines of the nursery. This is a reflection of the good induction programme, visits home and involvement of parents as well as the positive relationships created by all staff in the nursery. Generally relationships are good throughout the school. However, a small number of pupils responding to the questionnaire said that they did not know which adult to turn to if worried.

31. Although teachers know their pupils well, the way in which they monitor their academic progress is less well embedded. Some teachers set clear personal targets for pupils based on the good assessment procedures but this is not consistent across all classes. In discussion, some pupils said they did not know what they were meant to be working on to improve.

32. The school has taken particularly effective action to seek pupils' views. These views are clearly valued; books have been made on each class' suggestions for the new school but more importantly, developments have resulted from pupils' requests. New playground equipment has been purchased, toilets have been refurbished and a breakfast club has been introduced. This links to the similarly positive way in which the school listens to parents' views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Children are supported well in their learning by the school's very good partnership with their parents. Very effective links with neighbouring special and secondary schools are helping to develop teachers' expertise and providing useful experiences for pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships with parents are good and their ideas are actively sought and acted upon;
- Strong links with other schools and the local community benefit teachers and pupils.

Commentary

33. The school has sought the views of parents and has responded positively to their requests and further strengthened already positive relationships. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about school activities and events. The admissions arrangements for new pupils are good, particularly those for pupils starting in the nursery. Pupils and parents are well informed about the school's expectations, and effective communication with parents, particularly of children with special educational needs, lead to successful working relationships.

34. Annual reports to parents about their children's progress are informative and include pupils' own comments on how they have achieved. There is little information however, about what pupils have to focus on next in order to improve. Attendance at parents' evenings is extremely high and reflects the good level of support parents have for the school. Through schemes such as the Family Learning Programme, the school enriches parents' knowledge and skills which in turn impacts on

pupils' achievements. Past programmes have focussed on literacy and numeracy; the current programme is centred on information and communication technology skills and is fully subscribed by parents.

35. The school has worked hard to secure useful links between themselves and other schools. Pupils and staff gain much from the specialist teaching provided by two secondary schools in design and technology and the performing arts. There are also good partnerships with two special schools; several pupils with special educational needs benefit from the outreach work done and the dual placements they have. These opportunities develop their academic skills as well as their social skills. Good links with pre-school playgroups help new pupils to settle quickly into the nursery.

36. Pupils are actively encouraged to give their support to the wider community by raising funds for various charities and consider environmental issues through clubs such as the Eco School project.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Leadership is effective and many senior staff are carrying out their roles appropriately. Management systems need to be tightened up to become really effective in raising standards. The governing body supports the school satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are enthusiastic and involved in school life; they are keen to develop ways in which they can support the school further;
- Some subject managers are performing effective roles and have already had a significant impact on teaching, learning and pupils' achievement;
- Information from tests and assessments is being analysed carefully to identify pupils who are not doing as well as they should and who need further support;
- There is a firm commitment towards ensuring that all pupils are included fully in the life of the school;
- Improvement plans lack enough detail and focus to drive the school forward;
- Monitoring systems are not rigorous enough to check the success of new strategies, whether targets are being met and that weaknesses are being addressed.

Commentary

37. A key strength of the school is its commitment towards ensuring that every child can play a full part in school life and access the curriculum. This is the case for all pupils but is particularly noticeable in the way that pupils with statements of special educational need are enabled to participate in lessons and activities. Parents greatly appreciate the school's efforts in this. Pupils generally learn from the good examples set by staff; they value and respect each one of their classmates.

38. The governing body is relatively new but has benefited enormously from the expertise of governors who served on the governing bodies of the two schools which amalgamated last year. They have established useful systems to help them gather information about the school's work so they can take an active part in planning for the future. Governors are proud of their school but not complacent; they know that key areas require further development. They are keen to develop ways in which they can further support the school.

39. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership to the school and is assisted by some key staff who perform effective roles and who have been instrumental in moving the school forward in the short time it has been open. The development of literacy for example, has been due to strong and determined leadership and management in the subject; this has had a good effect on standards.

Clear leadership in science and information and communication technology has already resulted in improvement this term and has identified further developments for the future.

40. The provision for those pupils with statements of special educational need is monitored carefully and careful tracking of their progress along with effective communication with parents means that all are working together for the good of these pupils. The very good links with special schools in the area provide excellent opportunities for expertise to be shared amongst adults. The provision for other pupils with special educational needs is not so well managed. Although documentation is exemplary and makes it very clear to teachers exactly what pupils' needs are, provision in classes is not monitored carefully enough to ensure that pupils are actually receiving what has been recommended. The inconsistencies in teaching across the school mean that in some cases these pupils are catered for extremely well and in others, provision is sometimes weak. Similarly, the work of teaching assistants is not monitored rigorously enough to gauge the success of their work with pupils. Consequently their contribution is inconsistent.

41. Management systems are satisfactory. A great deal of work goes into analysing test results and records of pupils' progress and this information is used to identify pupils who are not making enough progress. Intervention groups have been formed to support some of these pupils but they are not monitored closely enough to assess how successful they are. The main thrust of the school's provision is through teachers' provision in classrooms and this at present is again not being monitored as closely as it should. Consequently, provision is inconsistent and the value of the careful analysis is lost.

42. Performance management systems are firmly in place and are clearly successful, based upon recent improvements in literacy provision and standards. However, in other areas, planning for school improvement is not as good: improvement plans are not focused enough because they do not use the detailed analysis and evaluation of results. This means is that the school has lots of information and data but does not always use this to drive forward improvements.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	929,757	Balance from previous year	New school
Total expenditure	838,289	Balance carried forward to the next	81,221
Expenditure per pupil	1,497		

Financial management is satisfactory. Funds are monitored carefully and financial decisions are made with a great deal of forethought and planning. Governors are actively involved in budget decisions and monitor school spending appropriately.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the nursery and two reception classes is **satisfactory** overall.

Effective plans allow children to make steady progress in all six areas of their learning. Topics are planned in a two-year cycle so there is no repetition. Classrooms and outside areas are spacious and teachers use them well to give the children varied and interesting experiences. The current lack of appropriate climbing equipment however, limits opportunities for children to develop a range of larger movements with control and co-ordination.

Teaching gives priority to communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development and also to mathematical development. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although some very effective lessons were seen during the inspection. Teachers and support staff have established an effective team approach, which benefits children's learning.

Assessments of children's levels of attainment are made on entry to the nursery and are updated regularly throughout the two years they spend in nursery and Reception classes. This data allows the staff to complete the statutory profile, which all children take with them when they move into the first year of the National Curriculum. This valuable information is not always used fully to inform planning for individual children to help them move on to the next step in their learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong links with parents and carers;
- Commitment to developing positive attitudes to learning;
- High expectations for children to work together, take turns, and have regard for other children's feelings.

Commentary

43. On entry to the nursery, many children have less developed skills in these areas than are typical for children of this age therefore a high priority is placed on development in this area. Well organised induction procedures and very good links with parents and carers ensure that children feel well supported and trust the adults who work with them. Both teaching and support staff have a shared understanding of expectations and a consistently calm and positive approach when encouraging the development of good behaviour and regard for other children's feelings. Adults acknowledge children's efforts well, which helps them feel confident and successful.

44. Staff understand when to intervene to help children make progress or to sustain interest, and also plan a range of activities in which children can work independently in pairs and in groups. Children are expected to work together and take turns in activities, and they do so with few reminders. In the reception class, children are introduced to the notion of care and support for newcomers when they welcome their "reception rabbit" into the classroom, introducing it to the routines and resources and writing notes of welcome. Children transfer these skills in real situations when new pupils arrive in school.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for children to develop these skills in all aspects of their learning;
- There are good opportunities for talk and discussion;
- Imaginative role-play provides children with good opportunities to further develop these skills.

Commentary

45. Children are encouraged to talk with an adult and with each other throughout the day. Through story-telling, children come to understand the way meanings are communicated in writing and join in repeated refrains in well loved stories with expression and understanding. Children are also encouraged to link sounds and letters and to classify objects by their initial sounds when they are ready to do so. In this way they build up secure knowledge of the sound system of English and the relationship between spoken and written language. Such work supports early reading development well. Children also attempt writing for a range of purposes, such skills developing across all areas of the curriculum. Early writing opportunities are also built into the imaginative role-play areas. Direct teaching is used well to introduce children to early literacy skills, for example letter shapes and sounds and how to use a pencil effectively.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use a highly visual and practical approach which helps the children understand new concepts;
- There is a good balance of directed and independent activities.

Commentary

46. The highly visual and practical approach to mathematics adopted by all members of staff allows all children, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, to understand the lessons well. For example, one group working with a nursery nurse rolled dice, identified the numbers one to three, and put rungs on a ladder corresponding to that number. They then compared the height of each other's ladders, counting the rungs accurately. The careful development within such an activity allowed children to develop understanding progressively.

47. In both nursery and reception classes, questioning is used well to develop and assess children's understanding, and simple interventions by staff help children achieve the learning objective. Adults also intervene as children work to teach them appropriate mathematical vocabulary, such as "more" and "less", "taller" or "heavier", and the names and attributes of two-dimensional shapes. In one very good lesson in a reception class, counting was accompanied by clapping and jumping, which reinforced children's learning; later they practised their counting skills in a very enjoyable playground game.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of imaginative role-play areas to develop new ideas in unfamiliar settings;
- Some activities not fully exploited to achieve planned learning.

Commentary

48. A suitable range of topics is planned so that children can investigate and begin to understand their world. An appropriate range of teacher-directed activities, such as baking cakes and imaginative role-play, is balanced by opportunities for children to explore materials independently.

49. Children are given good opportunities to explore the scientific processes involved in cooking; measuring and mixing materials, rolling and cutting the dough. Good questioning in one lesson allowed children to talk about what happened when different materials were blended. Opportunities were missed, however, to encourage them to hypothesise what would happen when they put their biscuits in the oven. Opportunities were also missed to further their personal and social skills by tidying up after themselves.

50. Opportunities are also provided for children to share their own family experiences. For example, one child talked about the lemon meringue pie his mother made and a Chinese child demonstrated her skill with chopsticks in a well planned follow-up to an assembly. Such talk allows children to come to understand the diversity of family life in their multi-cultural community.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities to use careful hand movements, for example cutting, sticking, mixing and rolling are built into many activities;
- Direct teaching of appropriate techniques and actions means children learn the correct way of doing things;
- Supervision in outdoor play is not always alert to potential dangers;
- Opportunities for more adventurous activities are more limited.

Commentary

51. Children are given good opportunities to handle a range of tools, including cooking utensils, pencils and scissors, and apparatus to explore the properties of different materials, for example wet and dry sand, and water. Children manipulate small construction equipment and a range of sorting and building materials well. Children are carefully taught how to blend flour and butter to make biscuit dough and to control paints when decorating their models.

52. Children do not have enough opportunities to learn to climb on large apparatus. This reduces the opportunities they have to develop and improve such larger movements of climbing under, over and through the equipment, or to travel with a sequence of movements and well developed spatial awareness.

53. In the outdoor area, children, especially boys, spent a high percentage of their time on bikes. This activity is not always appropriately monitored and some children become involved in very

boisterous play which is potentially dangerous. Because there is no rota for this activity, some children chose to do this activity exclusively; this restricts their development in other areas and means that the outdoor play area can become overcrowded.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of resources and opportunities for role-play.

Commentary

54. Children are given good opportunities to explore a range of equipment and materials for creative and artistic effect. They combine a range of resources and skills well, for example when nursery children constructed an impressive model from boxes, sprayed it with silver and finally decorated it by spattering a range of brightly coloured paints to improve the overall effect. Children work with a range of media and the finished results are displayed prominently so that the children feel proud and valued. Staff ensure that they learn how to use resources appropriately and evaluate their own work with confidence and good judgement.

55. Children join in favourite songs and rhymes with appropriate action and expression. They use their imagination in the wide range of role-play activities. Some are based on personal experiences and domestic routines, cooking, shopping, visiting, looking after babies, etc. Others are highly imaginative responses to particular themes or topics. For example, in a pretend emergency call centre, children take down messages from 999 calls and send out appropriate help with messages of sympathy to the callers.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is above that expected for their age; teachers in this part of the school have benefited from the expertise of the subject co-ordinator and are providing good quality teaching for the pupils;
- Pupils use their reading and writing skills well in many subjects;
- Pupils write with good attention to accuracy;
- Subject leadership is strong and effective;
- Teaching in Years 3-6 is inconsistent.

Commentary

56. The school places a strong emphasis on literacy and all pupils have a daily literacy lesson and regular sessions each week that address handwriting, spelling, guided reading and extended writing. Teachers teach the basic skills of spelling and punctuation systematically and address this aspect of pupils' work in their marking. As a result, pupils write accurately and take care to present their work neatly. The guided reading lessons ensure that groups of pupils have regular opportunities to read aloud and discuss texts with other pupils. They enjoy working together, learn from sharing ideas about the meaning of texts and improve their appreciation of literature. The provision of extended writing has had a positive impact and many pupils have made good progress this term in improving the content of their writing.

57. Pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching standards that are above what is expected for their age. When writing, they use the vocabulary that has been introduced within literacy lessons to express their ideas imaginatively. They show a good understanding of literature, and can express ideas confidently when speaking in pairs or within a class group. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in Years 1 and 2 due to the good teaching that they receive. Teachers have a very enthusiastic approach that motivates and stimulates pupils so that they have very positive attitudes to learning. They provide a very good range of resources to support and challenge pupils of all abilities appropriately. As a result pupils are confident to use wordbooks and dictionaries to help them with unknown words and to write independently. Teachers question pupils thoroughly and provide opportunities for them to extend the complexity of their language. They encourage pupils to participate fully through use of talk partners and small whiteboards so that pupils are regularly involved in recording their answers when working as a class. They assess pupils' progress well and use marking effectively to move pupils forward in their learning.

58. The teaching in Years 3-6 is less consistent and ranges from excellent to satisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, teachers show good subject knowledge, manage pupils effectively so that their behaviour and attitudes are good and make good use of questioning to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, teachers act as very good models to the pupils for writing and use a very good range of teaching methods to stimulate and motivate pupils, such as role-play and small group discussions. They have high expectations that pupils will work to improve their use of vocabulary and style and make these clear to the pupils. They ensure that pupils are focused on the lesson objectives as they work through the lesson and have the opportunity to assess their achievements at the end of the session. Pupils take a pride in their work and strive to do their best.

Example of outstanding practice

An outstanding literacy lesson in Year 4 built upon pupils' keen interest in their history work. The teacher catered extremely well for pupils of different abilities so that all achieved very highly.

Pupils were already excited and stimulated by their historical research into Henry VIII. The teacher harnessed this enthusiasm very effectively during a literacy lesson. A whole class discussion, with questions directed towards different pupils, reminded pupils of Henry's character. The teacher gave her pupils good opportunities to share their ideas with their 'carpet buddies', encouraging them to use lively adjectives when devising sentences for their character sketches. Expectations were extremely high; the teacher encouraged pupils sensitively to improve on their first attempts. Before starting their independent work, the teacher made it absolutely clear what pupils had to do to achieve success. Pupils therefore settled quickly to their tasks, and worked hard to complete them. The teacher made her high expectation known to the brightest pupils whilst supporting those with special educational needs very effectively by providing them with ideas about how they could start their sentences. Very effective reminders from the teacher meant that pupils concentrated on their individual targets for writing. The quality of the work completed was of an extremely high standard and reflected the teacher's good knowledge of the individual needs of her pupils.

59. In some lessons, however, the work is not matched well enough to pupils' learning needs. Occasionally, the work set requires too much writing or reading for some less able pupils and they lose concentration and do not make as much progress as they should. In some lessons, over zealous pupil management results in pupils having too few opportunities to show initiative and independence. Sometimes, the teacher's expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough and pupils do not concentrate sufficiently in whole-class discussions.

60. The school has recently introduced some effective procedures for marking and assessment. Where these are used well, teachers mark pupils' work against the lesson objectives, pupils' targets and success criteria. Pupils respond well to this approach. However, the setting of individual learning targets for pupils is inconsistently applied and most pupils are not familiar with what they need to do to improve their work.

61. The subject co-ordination is good. The subject leader is an Advanced Skills Literacy Teacher and is working hard to raise standards throughout the school. Strengths and weaknesses have been correctly identified and there are plans in place to address many of these. However, monitoring systems are not sufficiently frequent or focused to address the inconsistencies in the teaching.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to use their language and literacy skills in a range of subjects. Pupils use their reading skills confidently within lessons to read instructions and information texts and to carry out research. They write in a range of styles for different purposes, for example they record investigations in science and write diaries and play scripts in history. They listen well and can use their speaking skills to express their ideas effectively when required.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French is taught to Year 6 pupils for one hour a week. No lessons were observed so no judgement can be made about the provision.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards were well above average in the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2003;
- Resources are well used to make learning easier and more enjoyable for the pupils;
- Work is neatly presented;
- Higher attaining pupils are sometimes not sufficiently challenged;
- Teaching is inconsistent across the school and this leads to variations in the rates of pupils' progress;
- Monitoring systems are not successful in checking the impact of new developments on pupils' learning.

Commentary

63. The very good performance of Year 2 pupils in 2003 is unlikely to be repeated by the present year group. This is because of differences in the abilities of the two cohorts of pupils involved. By Year 6 standards are in line with national expectations and their achievement is appropriate. Not all pupils are able to work according to their capability because of some unsatisfactory teaching and a general lack of challenge for the most able pupils. Last year girls did not do nearly as well as the boys in Year 6, but the school is checking this difference closely. In the present Year 6, there is little difference between the achievements of boys and girls.

64. The National Numeracy Strategy gives pupils a basic grounding in number and in most lessons teachers offer pupils an effective fun starter in mental arithmetic. Resources are imaginatively used to make lessons interesting. However, pupils do not do enough investigations or problem-solving. They do not have enough opportunities in some classes to explain their thinking, which hinders their rate of development.

65. Teaching is inconsistent, with some high quality lessons seen in Years 1, 2, 4 and 5 but there are some weaknesses in Years 3 and 6. Sensitive questioning, high expectations and challenging work mark the successful lessons. Pupils work at full capacity and make rapid progress. Unsatisfactory teaching has a sluggish pace, work that is either too easy or too hard and restless behaviour. In these lessons pupils do not make enough progress. In many cases higher attaining pupils are given work which is too easy for them. Marking also varies. In some classes pupils know the next steps for their learning, in others they have little understanding of how well they are doing. Throughout, work is neatly presented in books, and stimulating wall displays give pupils a pride in their work. Pupils' attitudes are usually good; they work well together and are enthusiastic in discussion.

66. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress, especially when taught in small groups. In these cases, teaching assistants support pupils effectively, and work is often well-planned. This is not the case in all lessons.

67. Recent test results have been analysed in detail and pertinent advice given to teachers. There has been some monitoring of teaching and pupils' work. However, the guidance is not always acted upon in classes and a lack of close monitoring means this has not come to light. Mathematics is a high priority for development during this school year.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Pupils use mathematics appropriately to help their learning in other subjects for example, science where pupils draw graphs to present results of experiments. Information and communication technology is well used to support learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective recent leadership which demonstrates the school's ability to improve; key actions have been identified and improvements are already happening in lessons;
- Pupils enjoy their science lessons, especially when they are practical;
- Pupils with statements of special educational need are well catered for in lessons;
- Standards in the 2003 national tests for Year 6 pupils were below average; they did not make enough progress from Year 2;
- Marking in pupils' books does not help them understand what they have achieved so far and what they need to do to improve;
- Teachers do not take enough account of pupils of different abilities; often the work is too easy for the brightest and too difficult for pupils with special educational needs;
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on results of their investigations.

Commentary

69. The standards attained by Year 6 pupils in the 2003 national tests were below the national average and below those expected against the prior attainment by these same pupils, indicated by statutory assessments made when they were in Year 2. Analysis of pupils' science books from last year, indicates low expectations of presentation and completion of tasks, poor transfer of literacy skills to science work, including unsatisfactory spelling of key words, and poor use of data to answer questions. Assessment through marking was also weak, giving few pointers for improvement and insufficient commentary on the science of the work completed.

70. Some of the shortcomings seen in last year's books have already been improved this term, though there is little evidence to show that the data collected on charts and diagrams, following a range of classroom investigations, are being used effectively by pupils to interpret their findings and consolidate new learning.

71. Teaching is satisfactory overall, though inconsistent in quality. Some lessons include well planned tasks, effective use of resources and follow-up activities to support pupils of different abilities. In some lessons teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and structure the lessons to allow pupils to understand new scientific concepts in well planned steps. For example, in a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils discussed the function of the heart and measured heart-rate before and after exercise. They discussed the variation in their readings and worked hard to ensure that their data was reliable by reducing any variable that might affect the results. In another lesson in Year 6, pupils set up an electrical circuit, hypothesising that it was the battery which was not strong enough to fulfill all the functions of the circuit, rather than a defective light. This was effective teaching and learning. Weaker teaching was characterised by poor subject knowledge, which confused the pupils who then found it difficult to complete the task.

72. A significant weakness in the teaching generally is the lack of detailed planning for lessons. Plans are brief and teachers are not yet considering the needs of pupils of different abilities. Work set is often the same for all, which results in the brightest pupils not making best use of their time and the least able pupils struggling to understand what they have to do.

73. The subject is led effectively and strengths and weaknesses have been identified. An action plan to improve teaching and learning and to raise standards is now in place. The plan is practical and simple enough to be clear to all. It can be easily monitored in classrooms to ensure that standards rise by the end of this academic year.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new computer suite is helping pupils to make rapid progress;
- Pupils' developing skills are used well in other subjects;
- Strong leadership gives confidence to the staff and identifies what they need to do to improve provision;
- The present range of software is limited and restricts pupils' progress in some aspects of the subject.

Commentary

74. By the end of Year 6 pupils have good knowledge, skills and understanding of the use of computers. They are currently making rapid progress because of improved facilities and teachers' growing confidence. The new computer suite with its interactive whiteboard inspires teachers and pupils alike.

75. The quality of teaching is often good, reflecting teachers' clear subject knowledge. Teachers' enthusiasm motivates pupils, who enjoy their lessons and work hard. The interactive whiteboard enhances the direct teaching of skills through demonstration. Sometimes one pupil in a pair monopolises the computer, but teachers try to make sure time is fairly distributed. Teachers occasionally do not fully exploit pupils' advances in understanding; pupils do not always have opportunities to talk about their work or share discoveries. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high, and help is provided swiftly when needed. Children with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants. Systems for children to assess their own progress are being introduced, so that they know what they are able to do and where they need to improve.

76. Leadership is effective. Information for staff is very helpful and effective support is given, for example in the use of digital technology. At present the range of software is limited and hinders some areas of pupils' development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Standards are above average because teachers make opportunities in other subjects for pupils to practise the skills they have learned in the computer suite. Computers in classrooms are well used. Teachers also use effectively other resources such as programmed robots in mathematics and sound patterns in music. Currently, not enough use is made of digital technology.

HUMANITIES

Geography

78. No lessons in geography were seen during the inspection as the main focus this term was on history. Samples of pupils' work from last term shows that they cover an appropriate range of topics over the year. Some of the older pupils' work was of high quality.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are able to write independently and present their work carefully;
- In some year groups, teachers make good links with other subjects;
- Some teachers use a good range of teaching methods that are lively and motivate pupils very well to develop enquiry skills and their understanding of the past;

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent within Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

79. Standards are in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of different historical periods.

80. Effective planning ensures that all pupils of a similar age cover the same topics. However, teaching approaches to the subject vary across the school. In some classes, such as in Years 2, 4 and 5 teachers use a good range of teaching methods such as 'hot seating' and 'carpet buddies' to stimulate pupils' sense of enquiry and to motivate them to learn about the past. For example, in one class, the teacher used role-play to encourage pupils to think about the plight of factory workers in Victorian times. The impact of this was evident in the improvement in pupils' knowledge and questioning techniques as the lesson progressed. They became very enthusiastic learners as well as more confident speakers. Some teachers make good links between subjects, such as in Year 5 when the pupils learn about a Victorian artist when drawing in the style of Marianne North and about Tudor Times when making a poster about Henry VIII. This approach makes effective use of curriculum time, interests pupils and helps them to make connections in their learning.

81. All teachers provide pupils with opportunities to record their ideas in their own words and pupils use their literacy skills confidently. They present their work carefully. Some teachers give pupils a good range of ways to explore and record their ideas, knowledge and understanding, such as writing play scripts in Year 4 about painters and portraits in Tudor times. In some classes the range of learning styles is too limited. Questions focus too much on knowledge and not enough on understanding. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their enquiry skills fully and often the most able pupils find the work too easy and make little progress. As a result, pupils sometimes lose interest and motivation.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Pupils are able to write independently and present their work carefully;
- Some teachers use a good range of teaching methods that develop pupils' ability to reflect, discuss and develop their understanding of belief;
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent within Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

82. Standards are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress.

83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching approaches to the subject vary across the school and this means that pupils' progress overall is not as consistent as it should be, particularly in understanding belief and symbolism. For example in Year 2 pupils are developing a satisfactory knowledge of the Christmas and Easter stories and are able to retell some of the events in line with requirements. In one class, however, pupils are also developing a more explicit understanding of the importance of Jesus and baptism in Christianity. In Year 6 most teachers, as part of the unit of study on marriage rites, provide pupils with opportunities to identify the significance of the wedding ring as a symbol and to reflect on their views of marriage in line with the syllabus. In one class, there is more emphasis on pupils acquiring information about marriage and pupils often copy text at a similar level regardless of their ability. This means that the work is not appropriate to challenge all pupils to consider the significance of traditions and to express their own ideas. Similar inconsistencies occur in other year groups.

84. Teachers often invite visitors, such as the local vicar, to provide more detailed information and the positive impact of this is evident in pupils' written work. Pupils are confident to write and express their ideas when given the opportunity to do so. They present their work neatly and with appropriate attention to spelling and punctuation. Occasionally, pupils do not listen to their teachers well enough and this restricts the progress that they make in a lesson. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and positively. Some teachers' written comments relate to the lesson objectives and these help pupils to focus on how well they are doing in developing the skills and knowledge related to religious education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. Lessons in **art and design**, and **design and technology** were sampled and therefore it is not possible to make judgements about standards and the quality of teaching. Pupils' work and teachers' plans were also analysed. It is clear that pupils receive an interesting range of learning experiences in both subjects. Many of these are linked with other subjects such as history and science. The school is making good use of its links with the neighbouring technology college to provide high quality teaching in design and technology for Year 6 pupils. This results in these pupils achieving well in lessons.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- there are good opportunities for children to learn how to play a musical instrument;
- the standard of pupils' singing is good.

Commentary

86. Pupils' achievement in music is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is also satisfactory. Some teachers present their lessons confidently and with enthusiasm and they transmit this well to their pupils who enjoy their music making. A comprehensive scheme of work is in place to ensure that all aspects of music are covered as pupils move through the school. This also provides good ideas and clear direction for teachers who have less confidence in the subject.

87. Visiting teachers provide lessons in guitar, drums, violin and a range of other instruments and these enable particularly talented pupils to develop their skills to high levels. Older pupils participate in an annual Arts Festival which gives them the chance to perform in front of a wider audience. A music teacher from one of the local colleges has worked with pupils and staff. This provided further opportunities for both pupils and teachers to develop their skills and knowledge.

88. Music is often used in assemblies to create a calm atmosphere as pupils enter and leave the hall. Pupils grow to appreciate a wide variety of music because of the different types played. Singing is always enthusiastic and tuneful and boys and girls sing with equal enjoyment. The pupils know a range of songs by heart, from traditional hymns to African songs.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The scheme of work is well organised giving clear guidance on how to develop pupils skills; in some cases however, it is not used by teachers to help plan their lessons;
- Some teachers have very good knowledge and skills in the subject and they use these very effectively to help pupils reach high standards in lessons;;
- Pupils can suggest ways in which improvements can be made to one another's work and this promotes good relationships and sensitivity.

Commentary

89. Most pupils achieve a broadly average standard in physical education by Year 6. Planning shows a sound balance of indoor and outdoor activities through the year, which develop pupils' skills effectively. A good range of extracurricular activities provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their skills to higher levels.

90. Teaching and learning better in Years 3 to 6 than for pupils in Years 1 and 2. In all sessions, teachers remind pupils about health and safety issues, giving clear demonstrations of stretching and aerobic exercise during warm-up sessions. In all but one lesson pupils were suitably dressed to enable freedom of movement and participation. Pupils throughout the school are keen to take part in lessons, but insufficient attention is given in some lessons to groupings by gender which leads to some unruly behaviour by boys.

91. Standards and achievement depend very much on the quality of the teaching. For example in a Year 6 netball lesson, the teacher showed good subject knowledge which enabled her to teach successfully specific skills of attacking, defending and intercepting. In a Year 5 gymnastics lesson, the teacher provided pupils with opportunities to evaluate and think critically about their work enabling them to refine and develop their movements creatively. Pupils were actively encouraged to use each others ideas as a resource. The teacher had clearly used the scheme to good advantage to raise the achievements of the pupils. Weak lessons occur when teachers do not use the good advice in the scheme of work and when they are not clear about what skills they are trying to improve. Pupils become confused and behaviour deteriorates.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

92. Although no formal lessons were observed, provision is judged to be **good**. Pupils receive good guidance from their teachers and other adults through their work in most lessons. Links with the community police officer are strong and effective. His regular visits to all classes ensure that pupils are taught carefully about substance misuse. Sex education is covered through science topics and discrete lessons for older pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	N/a
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

